

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



Anchorage Terminal Reserve, Anchorage, Alaska

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

August 2005

Progress on Environmental Work at Anchorage Terminal Reserve

The Alaska Railroad recently prepared three key documents for the Anchorage Terminal Reserve project. The documents are now available. You can view them on the website or at the locations listed on page 3. The documents include:

- a Site Background Report,
- a Remedial Action Objectives Technical Memorandum, and
- a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Work Plan.

The Site Background Report:

The background report shares historical information for the rail yard and leased properties within the reserve area. It also pinpoints data gaps for more study during the RI/FS. About 2,000 historical documents were reviewed. Those documents provided information on the site's geology and hydrogeology, past uses of chemicals, environmental investigations, and cleanups. Lab results from past work were put into a database.

This report also presents “preliminary conceptual site models” on:

- possible sources of contamination,
- possible routes that contaminants may travel through the environment, and
- potential human or ecological receptors (who or what may be at risk)

The Remedial Action Objectives Technical Memorandum:

This technical memorandum lays out general goals for protecting human health and the environment. It also summarizes contaminants of potential concern and describes some cleanup options that may be considered. Looking at these items early in the process helps make sure that the right data for decision-making are collected.

The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Work Plan:

The RI/FS work plan describes the field work that will be done starting this month. Soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment will be sampled. The samples will help evaluate:

- Potential contaminant pathways to Ship Creek
- The nature and extent of known and potential contamination sources
- Potential risks to humans and the environment, and
- The need for possible cleanup work.

Soil and groundwater sampling will be done along four east-west “transects” across the site. These transects run parallel to Ship Creek. This sampling will help resolve whether contaminant plumes exist and whether contaminants could enter the creek. Sampling also will be conducted in areas where there are data gaps. In total, soil and groundwater sampling will be done in about 100 places in the reserve area.

Surface water and sediment samples will be collected in the Ship Creek channel and in ponds and marshes. Sampling will be focused in areas where fine-grained sediment settles, where any contaminants would be expected to build up.

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Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Work Plan *continued*

Other RI/FS field work includes:

- Identifying properties with wells that may be used for drinking water or other purposes
- Sampling 5 springs along the northern bluff to check groundwater quality
- Gauging groundwater elevations across the reserve area to confirm flow directions and gradients
- Evaluating how the tide influences groundwater levels
- Measuring hydraulic conductivity in the shallow groundwater aquifer
- Interviewing property lessees at sites that were not available for inspection in 2000
- Evaluating surface cover as it relates to surface water runoff, industrial development, and natural vegetative cover.

Schedule of Upcoming Activities

August 2005 – Begin RI/FS field investigation work

November to December 2005 – Receive data

January to June 2006 – Review data adequacy, identify remaining data gaps, and propose additional sampling, as needed

Spring 2006 – Perform more groundwater sampling

2006 – Host Community Open House to discuss progress

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Funding for Community Group Technical Assistance

The Alaska Railroad Corporation soon expects to announce the opportunity for community groups to apply for funding. The funds can be used to get technical assistance to help review, comment on, and communicate about the site investigation process and the evaluation of any potential cleanup alternatives. Up to \$50,000 will be available to a group meeting certain criteria. This program will help communicate technical site information to the public and will facilitate meaningful public participation. For more information, call **Ernie Piper** at 907-265-2410.

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Site Background

The federal government transferred the Alaska Railroad to the state-owned Alaska Railroad Corporation in 1985. The Alaska Railroad Corporation owns the property known as Anchorage Terminal Reserve. Anchorage Terminal Reserve includes a rail yard and other properties leased to tenants. The area covers about 600 acres. Much of the land is near Ship Creek, in an industrial area of Anchorage. It is bordered by Cook Inlet to the west, Elmendorf Air Force Base to the north, the Mountain View community to the east, and downtown Anchorage to the south.

The rail yard includes a track system, repair buildings, a fueling area, a steaming rack, warehouses, and offices. Activities at the rail yard have included fueling, painting, steam cleaning, freight

loading, and maintenance work on locomotives and rail cars.

Properties outside the rail yard, leased to tenants, have been used for many different types of activities over the years. These include power plants, trucking and transit operations, fuel storage, auto salvage, and many others.

Environmental problems have been documented at both the rail yard and the properties outside the rail yard. Concerns have included solid waste handling, hazardous waste storage, seeps to Ship Creek, spills, and elevated contaminant levels in soils, groundwater, and sediments. Results from the upcoming sampling work will help determine whether and to what extent a threat to human health or the environment exists.



For More Information

Documents

Documents about this project can be viewed at:
Alaska Resources Library and Information Services
University of Alaska, Anchorage Library Building
Anchorage Terminal Reserve Information Repository
3211 Providence Drive, Suite 111
Anchorage, AK 99503
907-272-7547

EPA Region 10
Records Center, 7th Floor
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101-1128

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Website
www.epa.gov/r10earth
Click on Index. Click on A for Anchorage Terminal Reserve.



Alternative formats

are available upon request. Please call Andrea Lindsay to request reasonable accommodation:
800-424-4372 x1896. TTY: 800-877-8339.

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Environmental Fact Sheet
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This **EPA Fact Sheet** updates you on environmental activities at the **Anchorage Terminal Reserve**.

Inside you can read about:

- three new site reports
- funding for a community group
- upcoming activities
- where to get more information